

Skills for Democracy – Lesson plan 6

Devolution

Objectives

- Students will understand what the roles of different institutions are.
- Students will develop an understanding of what is meant by devolution.
- Students will learn about issues relating to democracy in Wales, and about key events in the history of democracy and devolution in Wales.

Resources

- Information sheet
- Topic cards
- Target paper
- Scissors
- Pens and paper

Time

One hour

Room Layout

Tables in groups, splitting class into 4

Introduction

Deciding who should be responsible for different fields of policies is quite difficult. Knowing about devolution will help students to understand more about their country and the way it is governed.

Introductory Activities (25 minutes)

“Call my Bluff”: what is devolution? (10 minutes)

- Ask the class to write definitions for “devolution” in groups of 3.
- Pick out 3 (including a correct one, which you may have to provide).
- Ask the class to vote on which one they think is the right answer.

Target activity (15 minutes)

- Provide the target and a topic cards sheet (one of each for each group).
- Ask the class who is responsible for each topic and compare.
- Give them the true answers and ask them to read the information sheet.
- Were the class surprised? Are there any comments?
- Ask them who they think *should* be responsible for some of the policies.

Main Activity (20 minutes)

- Ask students to create a “map”/street of local things which are under the control of the National Assembly for Wales – you may wish to use the road printed in the Project Workbook.
- What is missing? (The most obvious one is justice.)
- Would they prefer the National Assembly to look after justice issues in Wales?
- Are they happy with these services? What can they do about them?

Plenary – Assessment (10 minutes)

- Had the students heard about devolution before?
- Were they surprised about what they learnt?
- Do they feel concerned about the topic?
- Complete self-assessment using the “Parthenon paper”.

Organisations/websites with useful resources

- National Assembly for Wales www.wales.gov.uk
- Scottish Parliament www.scottish.parliament.uk
- DevWeb: guide to devolution in the UK www.devolution.info
- Devolution and Constitutional Change www.devolution.ac.uk
- University College, London www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit
- UK Parliament www.parliament.uk/devolved/devolved.cfm
- The Electoral Commission – publishers of *The Democracy Cookbook*

Information Sheet: Devolution

What is devolution?

Devolution or **home rule** is the granting of powers from central government to government at regional or local level.

What is Wales' government like?

Wales has an elected assembly to develop and implement policies for the people of Wales. The National Assembly consists of **60 members**. Members use the title **AM** (Assembly Member) or, in Welsh, **AC** (*Aelod y Cynulliad*). The AMs, the Assembly Parliamentary Service and Ministerial support staff are based in Cardiff Bay.



The executive and civil servants (people producing statistics and researching) are based in Cardiff's Cathays Park and in other centres across Wales.

Did you know...?
 The National Assembly determines how the government budget for Wales is spent and administered.

Areas which the National Assembly for Wales controls

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Agriculture ✓ Education ✓ Highways ✓ Local Government ✓ Tourism ✓ Water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Culture ✓ Environment ✓ Housing ✓ Social Services ✓ Planning ✓ Welsh Language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Economic Development ✓ Health ✓ Industry ✓ Sport ✓ Transport |
|--|--|--|

Arguments for and against devolution

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Public support ✓ Opportunity to adopt new and innovative procedures ✓ Decisions are made locally by those affected by them ✓ Preferable to the complete disintegration of the UK ✓ The separate regions of the UK have distinctive cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ It is a call for independence; it may stop the United Kingdom being united ✗ It is expensive: the process, the new buildings and additional staff ✗ The power distribution is now confused and unclear ✗ There is no point unless <i>everything</i> is completely devolved

Europe

UK

Wales

You



Topic cards

Health	Education	War
Sport	Culture	Terrorism
The Welsh Language	Tourism	Environment
Drug policy	Peace	Agriculture
Foreign Policy	Industry	Taxes

Case study – Scottish devolution

The Scottish Parliament referendum

In a referendum* held in September 1997, the majority of those who voted endorsed the UK Government's proposals to set up a Scottish Parliament and Executive to administer Scottish affairs.

The result of the referendum:

- Set up a Scottish Parliament (74.3% in favour)
- Give the Scottish Parliament the ability to vary taxes (63.5% in favour)

Since 1999, the Scottish Parliament has brought about a number of changes, including:

- Abolishing 'up front' tuition fees for university students
- Banning smoking in enclosed public places
- Investing £1 billion in refurbishing schools

Powers of the Scottish Parliament

The Scotland Act 1998 put into practice the Scottish electorate's desire for the return of a fully functioning legislative body. For the first time since the 1707 Act of Union, Scotland now has a legislative body which can create Acts of Parliament*. However, the UK Parliament also retains the ability to pass Acts which affect Scotland. Unlike the Westminster Parliament, the Scottish Parliament does not have a second chamber to revise legislation.

The Scottish Parliament can pass legislation relating to:

- education
- local government
- housing
- tourism
- civil and criminal law
- emergency services
- economic development
- agriculture
- sport

Although Scottish devolution is an attempt by the UK Parliament in Westminster to satisfy nationalist feelings in Scotland, it may eventually lead towards an independent Scottish nation-state. An opinion poll in September 2006 found that 64% of Scots wanted the Scottish Parliament to have more power, while 44% supported total independence.

The Scottish Executive

The Scottish Executive is the name given to Scotland's devolved government. It comprises the First Minister, about 20 Scottish Ministers appointed by the First Minister, the Lord Advocate, and the Solicitor General.

Scottish Devolution Quiz



William Wallace and Gromit



1. What is the name of the Act that established the Scottish Parliament?
 - The Government of Wales Act 1998
 - The Scottish Act 1998
 - The Scotland Act 1998
2. Which year was the Scottish Parliament established?
 - 1997
 - 1998
 - 1999
3. What was the name of the Scottish Parliament in 1707?
 - Estates of Scotland
 - House of Scots
 - Kilt House
4. Where is the Scottish Parliament located?
 - Glasgow
 - Edinburgh
 - Aberdeen
5. What do we call the members of the Scottish Parliament?
 - MPs
 - MSPs
 - MPSS
6. Why does the Scottish Parliament have more power than the National Assembly for Wales?
 - The referendum was set up to allow more devolved powers for Scotland than for Wales
 - Scottish politicians are more hard working than Welsh politicians
 - Their Parliament is nicer than ours
7. Which powers does the Scottish Parliament have?
 - Passing laws and limited tax-varying capability
 - Tax-varying capability only
 - Passing laws only
8. How many members are there in the Scottish Parliament?
 - 60
 - 100
 - 129
9. What are some of the "devolved matters"?
 - Abortion, drug policy, employment
 - Domestic authority, and all foreign policy
 - Education, health, agriculture, and justice
10. What title is given to the leader of the Scottish government?
 - Secretary of State for Scotland
 - First Minister
 - Prime Minister

Scottish Devolution Quiz

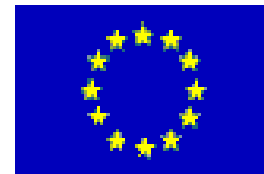
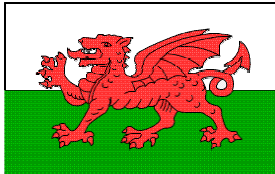
(With correct answers in bold)



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Devolution – Skills Sheet

1. *Wales; UK; Europe (in a group)*



LISTENING

* You will listen to other people's opinions in your group.

DEBATE

* You might have to justify to the rest of your group why you think things should go in particular places.

COMPROMISE

* You might have to change your ideas in order to agree.

2. *Making a map (on your own)*



DECISION MAKING

* You will need to choose what goes on your map.

3. *Class Discussion (whole class)*



LISTENING

* You will be listening to other people's opinions about devolution.

Skills for Democracy
Self-assessment “Parthenon paper”

Devolution

DECISION MAKING

LISTENING

DEBATING

MEETING

COMPROMISE

YOU